

Survey confirms 'me-ism' attitude

By GABRIEL BOEHMER
Of the Emerald

Today's college generation is uneducated, self-centered and headed for vocational disaster, according to a recent study released by the Carnegie Foundation for the advancement of teaching.

Dr. Arthur Levine, the study's author, coined the term "me-ism" to describe the social blight afflicting students.

University faculty and student leaders contacted Wednesday confirmed his suspicions.

University journalism Prof. James Lemert, a public opinion expert, agreed with Levine's general diagnosis and remedy for this college generation.

"This is a vocational, get-my-slice-of-the-pie generation," Lemert says.

The Carnegie Foundation is a highly respected research institution, Lemert says, and we should pay attention to the study's results.

Lemert has observed that University students are overly concerned with the vocational aspect of education and have a "hyper-anxiety" about finding post-graduation employment.

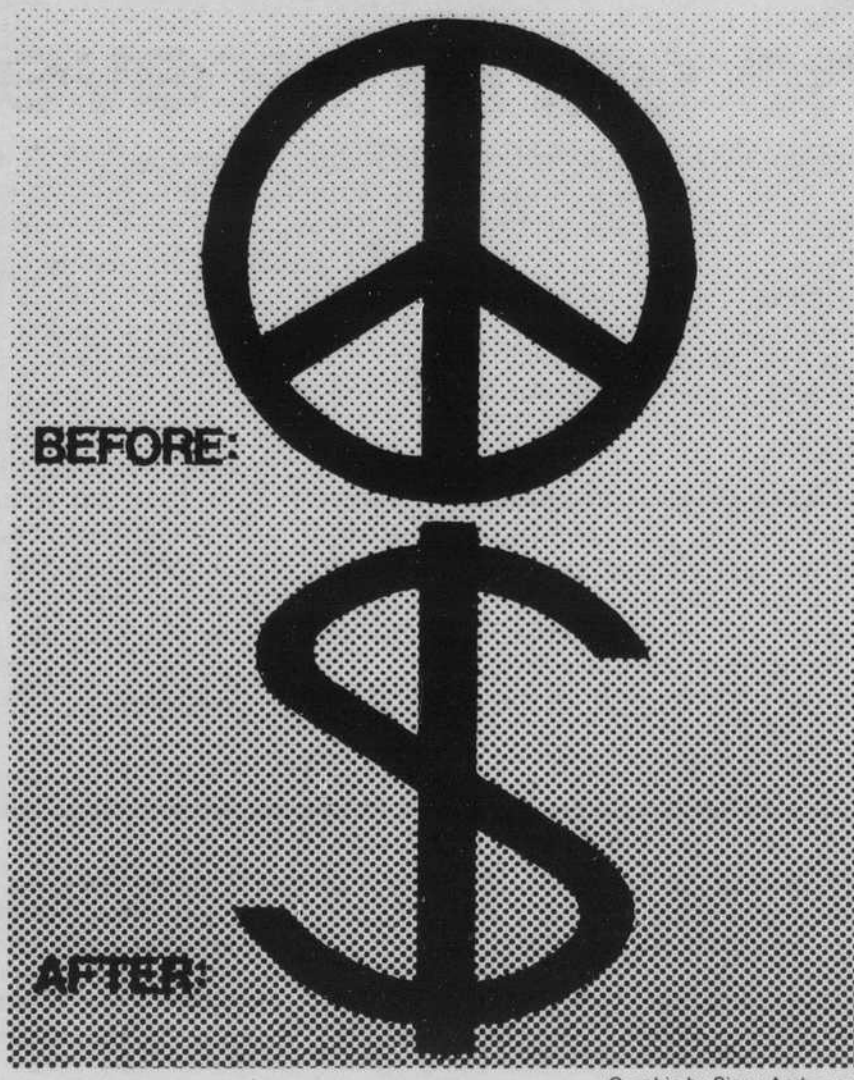
Students have a lack of interest and an inability to "look beyond those blinders" to the academic aspect of their education, Lemert says.

"Students have to acquire some skills in dealing with abstraction," Lemert says.

Lemert says academic training outlasts the rapidly changing vocational skills students are concerned about.

Students without the "abstract skills" provided by a liberal arts education find it very hard to adapt to situations not structured to their vocational training, Lemert explains.

"Abstractions are the kinds of things you can put in your



Graphic by Sioux Anderson

pocket and carry with you," Lemert says. "Abstractions will not become irrelevant."

ESCAPE student director Jim Doty has a different perspective. He believes today's college students have been mislabeled the "me generation."

"I don't think it fits from what I see students doing," Doty says.

But he does agree students are concerned about post-graduation employment.

"It's the get-a-haircut, get-a-job mentality," Doty quips.

University students aren't doing their own thinking in the classroom, Doty explains. Students can regurgitate what

professors tell them into a bluebook, but they can't do any thinking on their own, he says.

However, the ESCAPE program forces students to do just that, he says.

ESCAPE participants must set their own goals and objectives and evaluate their learning, Doty explains.

"You'd be surprised how many fourth-year students come up here and can't do that," Doty says.

Today's students are "spoon fed" motivation though grades and the promise of employment with a college degree, Doty adds.

"People are so busy getting a degree they don't have time to get an education," Doty says. "There is little intrinsic motivation in students."

Another perspective on Levine's results is offered by University economics Prof. Ed Whitelaw.

Whitelaw says the truth is many students who turned away from the group-orientation of the 1960s to return to the establishment short-changed themselves in excluding the liberal arts from their education.

Whitelaw says those who went to school for marketable skills excluded the enriching part of their education that would be more valuable to them 10 years down the road.

That's one vote in favor of Levine's conclusions, one against, and one non-partisan explanation.

ASUO President Dave Eaton casts his vote in favor of Levine. Eaton says the description of

today's University students as the "me-generation" is accurate.

But it's not Levine's description that angers him.

"The fact that's the way students are makes me angry."

As a case in point, Eaton says it was difficult to convince University students to lobby for higher education at the Legislature.

"Ten years ago it wouldn't have taken anything to get them out in the streets."

Faced with economic pressures, Eaton says students "have to spend more time on surviving."

Eaton agrees with the study's conclusion that student government is the most powerful group on campus — because that is the group that controls student money. But he says the real power of the ASUO lies in its lobbying efforts for higher education funding at the Legislature.



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To bolster ridership

LTD drops cost of bus tokens

Lane Transit District bus rides will be 10 cents cheaper this summer under a discount program approved Tuesday by the LTD Board.

The cost of tokens — bus passes purchased in advance and good for one ride — will be 50 cents from June through August, a 10-cent savings from the regular per-ride price. The tokens now cost 55 cents.

The board approved the rate reduction to help offset a drop in ridership since the district raised its rates last June. Board members hope the discount will entice more people to become regular bus riders.

Tokens may be purchased at 7-11 stores, the EMU and other locations around town.

The board also approved the comprehensive bus route redesign that staff members have been

working on for the past 10 months.

The new route system, which will be implemented in September, changes many of the current loop routes to line routes that provide more direct service to the downtown bus station.

The new routes will be easier to adjust to meet changing ridership demand, LTD officials say, and will provide direct service to the University from southeast and southwest Eugene. Riders to the University from those areas currently have to transfer buses downtown.

LTD officials say the new routes will provide the same bus coverage — as measured by the number of households located within a quarter mile of a bus route — and will reduce travel time for rush-hour commuters.

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